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ABSTRACT

This progress report of the Advisory Council on Women's Opportunities at the University of Pittsburgh discusses: (1) the history of the Council, and (2) the operating procedures, including some of the major problems encountered both within the Council and from outside the group itself. Its major aim has been to conduct a study on the position of women in 4 major areas of the University: faculty, students, administration, and non-faculty employees. The report also lists some of the other studies produced by the Council and presents recommendations to the Chancellor regarding the Council and some recommendations in general that the University is advised to implement immediately in an attack on sex discrimination. (AF)

ED 045054

November 3, 1970

Dr. Wesley W. Posvar, Chancellor
University of Pittsburgh
106 Cathedral of Learning
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213

Dear Dr. Posvar:

The Advisory Council on Women's Opportunities has chosen at this time to issue a progress report on our activities since we were instituted in July. We do this in an effort to keep you fully informed about what we have been doing, what we consider some of the major problems we have encountered both within the Council and from outside the group itself, as well as giving you some conception of the direction in which we are moving in the fulfillment of the charge you have given us. In this report we have put forth some of the problems in sex discrimination at the University of which we have been made aware during these last three months and some of the areas we are currently looking into for the purpose of more clearly defining the problem at Pitt.

Also presented in this report are several recommendations which the Council feels the University should begin to implement now as a beginning in the attack on sex discrimination at Pitt. The Council realizes that the problem at Pitt is far-reaching and that some of these recommendations will take work and time in preparation and hence our reasons for letting you know as soon as possible some of the things we see as being immediate necessities.

We will continue to work with the four study officers and endeavor to keep communications between the Council, yourself and these officers as well as the University community as open as possible.

Respectfully,

Mary Lou Burger, Chairwoman
and the Advisory Council on
Women's Opportunities

MLB:mk

Enclosure

cc: Four study officers and Council members

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ED 045054

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES

Progress Report to the Chancellor

November 2, 1970

I. History

The Advisory Council on Women's Opportunities, formerly known as the Advisory Committee on Women's Opportunities, was established by Dr. Wesley Posvar, Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh in a directive memo on May 29, 1970. That memo provided that the Council "in order to gain representation of a broad range of attitudes and opinions will be comprised as follows: 1.) four faculty members appointed by the President of the University Senate; 2.) four students, to include the elected presidents of Women's Housing Board, Associated Women Students, Panhellenic Association, and one graduate student; 3.) four non-faculty employees appointed by the Director of Personnel; and 4.) four administrators appointed by the Chancellor." Chancellor Posvar, Dr. Jack Matthews, Myron Skrabut, and Vice-Chancellor Kobosky made the appointments. The Council members were to represent different areas of the University as well as differing attitudes toward feminist questions. The appointers did not design a committee which shared common attitudes on women's rights, but rather one which reflected various representative attitudes. The qualifications of the members were thus weighed in favor of the women's positions in the University rather than in terms of a common commitment to equal opportunities for women.

Furthermore, the appointers' concept of the group was that of a committee, not a council. The group found that it could not operate in the usual University committee manner - giving freely of its time in order to deal in this case with the problems of women. In order to encompass the Chancellor's charge, the group had to adopt the council model which would indicate the high priority level of the task.

The committee set to work during the summer to define its functions.

The Committee was to "serve as a source of collective advice, consultation and assistance to the administrative officers charged with conducting the study," but was not to "attempt to conduct the study itself." In other words, the Committee was expected to provide inputs to the four Study Officers who were often unclear about their own tasks, and who initially could not provide the Committee with pertinent information or data on which to "advise" them. However, the Committee was not to gather data or information itself in the areas of the University which it knew exhibited discrimination against women. As it became more clear that, in fact, the Study Officers often did not know how to employ the resources of the Committee for "consultation, advice, or inputs," the Committee's role became even more confusing. In addition, the Committee, without being able to amass any information or data, had difficulty providing significant input when charged with a mandate as comprehensive as investigating "women's educational career opportunities at the University of Pittsburgh." Either the Committee's function was to acquaint itself with all the facts and attitudes involved in all four areas in order to get a comprehensive view; or its function was to wait until it was approached by the administrators in order to give advice on their studies. Neither possibility seemed to help clarify the desire of the Committee to become acquainted with the problems and to be of service. To undertake the comprehensive task thoroughly and effectively is also unrealistic in terms of the time deadlines set by the University (January 15) and the time limitations in terms of the busy schedules of all of the women on the Committee.

Finally, the role of the Council in preparing reports during the course of the study was unclear from the beginning. Not until October 15 did the Council learn that a preliminary report was not expected on November 1, at the same time as the Study Officers made their reports. Had this been known, the Council could

have provided some productive services to the University in vital areas that have proved impossible because of time limitations and unrealistic task deadlines.

The Council was obviously not clearly informed about the nature of the four Vice-Chancellors' tasks. There was a lack of guidelines, a reluctance on the part of a few administrators to discuss the nature of the problem, and an inability on the part of some to articulate to the Council what help was needed, how the Council could best "advise" in terms of its original mandate to act in an advisory capacity. In addition, when the Council as a result set about to develop its own roles and recommendations to the Chancellor and to the Vice-Chancellors, the suggestions were met in many instances with reluctance. Also, the group has not been consulted on several facets of the study.

II. Operating Procedures

One of the first projects that the Committee undertook was to alter the view of itself by developing as its model the idea of a Council rather than committee. It then informed the Chancellor that in order to deal with the massive problem of acquainting itself with the situation at the University of Pittsburgh as it relates to women, the Council would need a staff of women - a responsible high-level administrative officer, an administrative specialist, an administrative assistant, and a secretary, in addition to the office space which it now occupies on the thirty-third floor of the Cathedral. After negotiating with the Chancellor, the Council was permitted by October to hire Mrs. Elizabeth Scott as an Administrative Assistant for a term of four months at $513 per month. Mrs. Scott has access to help from a secretarial pool. At the same time it asked for staff, the Council also informed the Chancellor that it was adding six new members in order to fill deficient areas of representation - specifically black women who were represented by only one woman, since one of the two black appointees had resigned. The Coun-

cil gave the Chancellor the names of four black women. It also gave the name of an undergraduate who represented the College of Arts and Sciences, and the name of a person to represent the regional campuses. The Chancellor agreed that these areas were underrepresented, agreed to send letters of invitation to the women, but then, without asking the advice of the Council, appointed an additional six members to balance the Council's recommendations. The Council, therefore, has had several periods of assimilation - its initial formation, the absorption of its own recommended women and the absorption of the Chancellor's final appointments; the Council including its staff members, now numbers thirty women. Each time a new group or member has been added (as late as October 23), the Council has had to confront the inevitable redefinition of its structure and process.

The Council has also had to negotiate with the Chancellor for funds - funds for materials, for necessary Consultants, and for necessary services. In order to accomplish its function, the Council has needed to have ongoing financial resources. The Council now has a minimal operating budget, which includes no money for research, questionnaire development, and analysis.

The mode of operation of the Council and its organizational structure have evolved progressively as the perceptions by the Council members regarding their roles in the conduct of the study have changed. By consensus of the initial members of the Council, meetings were held once a week, until all business was completed for that week. The first several meetings were concentrated on the selection of a chairwoman, on an evaluation of the adequacy of representation of women from all areas of the University on the Council, and on attempts to become familiar with the numerous programs, reports, and plans of the University with respect to educational and career opportunities for women to which the Council had access.

The actual work of the Council then began with a series of interviews with the four Study Officers to gain information as to how those officers planned the conduct of their respective parts of the study, and to determine what input the Council could provide.

The four areas did not lend themselves to similar approaches; consequently, it was difficult for the representatives of the four areas to borrow from each other or share with each other. One of the representatives presented a detailed and thoughtful research format, and requested that Council members participate in the writing of the questionnaires and share fully in the policy decisions. Several members of the Council responded by devoting dozens of hours to difficult questionnaire development, and then sat down with that area's representatives to share in the several cooperative revisions. Two of the revisions occurred because the activities and research being undertaken in another area were not readily and openly made available to the Council. That unnecessary redundancy and repetition was unfortunate because of the valuable time wasted by Council and administrative members. One of the Vice-Chancellors notified the Council prior to his meeting with them that he needed a good deal of direction from them and would welcome the receipt of thoughtful questions. Two Council members responded by writing a clarification of all the divisions and responsibilities in that Vice-Chancellor's area. All the Council members then responded by writing questions for each of the several divisions. These questions were compiled and submitted in outline form, by division, to the Vice-Chancellor in the Council's report in response to his request. At least two of the area representatives submitted stacks of data and material which the Council received and attempted to analyze.

Much time was wasted by claims that the data was already gathered and then discoveries that it was not available in appropriate or usable form. All

of these problems are usually present in any research project; but seldom to the degree encountered here. Part of the difficulty came because the research had little precedent; and certainly no substantive studies are available from which to determine guidelines. The Council finally realized that it was in no way equipped to analyze the stacks of data; consequently, it requested data breakdown and summary.

In some instances, the area representatives remained in contact with the Council after their initial meeting. In other instances, no further communication ensued. All four area representatives could have avoided any lack of communication or mistrust which developed by sending the Council a brief weekly progress report, along with copies of their directives to their staffs; this approach is common and appropriate business and administrative procedure. In no other way can advice and input be given by an Advisory Council. Unfortunately, little of this communication occurred, to the disadvantage, extra consumption of time, and redundancy for all concerned. After weeks of silence from some areas, the Council finally found it essential to request the information and progress report. On October 19, the Council passed a resolution asking for information on the delineation of responsibilities assigned in each area, what information has resulted from the research in each area up to that date, and copies of directives and memos sent from the study officers to their staffs. The intention of the Council in that resolution was to acquire a comprehensive view of how the study was being conducted, which tasks were being undertaken by whom, and what material has been amassed by that point in time.

The Council has also conducted hearings with various university groups, such as meetings with a group of women from GSPIA. Consultants have been used several times - from meeting with experts on women's affairs during the Symposium on Feminism and with officials from Health, Education, and Welfare. It has heard

grievances from specific individuals and groups on campuses. At one point a woman student spoke to the Council about the difficulties she and a group of women students had encountered in trying to develop an Intercultural House either in conjunction with the men or as a separate experience for women.

As the role of the Council in the study became more clearly defined, organizational structures were created to increase efficiency within the Council and to facilitate its advisory function with the four Study Officers. The structures which have been set up to date follow: 1.) the bureaucreatic Council business is conducted by the Chairwoman, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant and secretary; 2.) four women from the Council have been designated as liaisons in order to facilitate communications between the four Study Officers and the Council: Finance - Nancy Kirkwood, Provost's Office - Konnilyn Feig, Health Professions-Rae Siporin, Student Affairs - Gail Hornstein; 3.) working with each of the four liaisons are a number of task forces, which are concerned with investigating and providing inputs in a variety of areas falling within each of the four parts of the study. The task forces concern themselves with the accumulation of information and suggestions in a given area, which are either communicated directly to the appropriate Study Officer by the Council itself, or are discussed via the liaison with the Study Officer. His suggestions, in turn, will be communicated back to the Council for its consideration, in order to facilitate an atmosphere of cooperative effort in the conduct of the study. Also, since the group had doubled its size, it developed more formal procedures. It has adopted Robert's Rules of Orders, Simplified, in order to facilitate the business of meetings and in order to make its business more official. It has voting procedures and the nature of a quorum in order to legitimize its resolutions; and it has moved to lighten the work burden on the Chairwoman by tightening the weekly agenda in order to cover the mass amounts of data it must handle. In addition, some of the administrators have been overheard

to speak disparagingly of the Council, sometimes humorously. The necessary verbal support in order to gain credibility has seldom been articulated beyond the Chancellor's initial commitment to the abolition of sex discrimination at the University of Pittsburgh.

III. Council Data Available

Other than its recommendations for the Vice-Chancellor's studies, and other than the responsibilities it has undertaken for women in the University of Pittsburgh greater community, the Council has produced the following reports - a preliminary report on the Medical School, a report on the Faculty Handbook, a report on the Employee Handbook, and a report on the Affirmative Action Program. It has helped develop the questionnaires for the Provost's Office, has made recommendations on them, and has also created its own questionnaires and tests which could most effectively organize and develop the critical data necessary in order to have the most helpful picture of the situation of women at the University of Pittsburgh.

IV. Recommendations

It is possible for the Council to make certain recommendations now before the full study is completed. On the basis of its explorations of the situation to this time, it recommends the following course of action:

A. Regarding the Council

1. There is a need for full-time professional staff for the Council. Either a top-level woman administrator should be appointed who can coordinate the massive task confronting the University in its articulated commitment to improving the situation for women at the University of Pittsburgh; or a full-time compliance officer should be hired from outside the University; or a full-time faculty member should be hired who has knowledge of problems relating to women.

2. There is a need for a fully paid competent staff which will be responsible to the Administrator. The staff can work directly with her, handling agenda, programming, making contacts, keeping records, obtaining data, coordinating the work of the Council, the administrators, and the university community. Particularly the staff can relieve the many burdens on the time of the women on the Council who have received added work but no compensation or assistance.

3. The Chancellor can immediately act to reduce the burden on all Council members by responding at the earliest opportunity to the Council's letter requesting help for individual members. (See Appendix I) All active Council members have added to their work loads or have had to double their work loads in order to meet effectively and responsibly the mandate of the Chancellor.

4. The Chancellor and four Vice-Chancellors can begin to utilize the Council as an advisory and recommending body.

5. The Chancellor can issue a statement fully supporting the activities of the Council and thereby its legitimacy and credibility.

6. The Chancellor can give full assurance that no woman on the Council will suffer retaliation because of her participation on that body. There must be a consistent, clearly verbalized policy which would assure Council members of no retaliation against them for any statements or activities they may make or engage in arising as a result of serving on the Council. This includes not only such concrete things such as dismissal from a position, but the more subtle forms of retaliation such as decreases in delegation of responsibilities, curtailment of budgets and grants, and especially such things as verbal abuse, threats, or any other actions that would prevent Council members from feeling free to express any opinions which they may have, however, unpopular they might be.

7. The Chancellor and four Vice-Chancellors can make freely available all requested and necessary information.

8. The Chancellor should extend the deadline for the completion of the study beyond January 15, because of the size of the task, the difficulty of securing and analyzing the data, and the time necessary to prepare appropriate recommendations.

B. General Recommendations

1. The University can hire a woman recruiter now or utilize the suggested woman administrator and her staff to act in a recruiting capacity in order to begin immediate hiring of women faculty and women administrators.

2. The University can immediately develop a program which will coordinate the three existing courses on women, (in History, in Sociology, and in English) and expand the program to include more courses and research facilities in this area. The University can immediately hire women to fill faculty positions, particularly related to this discipline.

3. The University can financially support existing plans and programs for Child Care Centers. (It can begin to immediately lay the groundwork for such centers which should be available to the University of Pittsburgh women in all areas.)

4. The University can act immediately to eliminate all nepotism practices.

5. The University can act immediately to initiate pregnancy leave policy for all women employees.

6. Major publications must be reprinted in order to remove the biases against women, e.g., the faculty handbook, staff handbook, admissions material, and Medical School publications.

7. The University can take steps now to actively recruit more women into graduate programs, and into professional schools which have had a very low representation of women in the past, i.e., Schools of Engineering, Medicine, Law, and Business. It is recommended that women recruiters be hired for these jobs, as the

presentation of a visible role model is an important consideration for women in deciding to enter such professions. Recruitment of women at the undergraduate level for such programs as Engineering and Pre-Med must also be undertaken.

8. The University can determine now that the granting of fellowships for women graduate students take place according to the same criteria as male students. At this time it has been proven in a number of departments that women are expected to have higher qualifications than men for such grants. In addition, the practice of dropping women first (especially married women) from fellowship aid and teaching assistantships when financial considerations make cut-backs necessary must be stopped.

9. The University can make special attempts to invite women speakers and lecturers to the University. This should include speakers invited for the general University community, as well as lecturers invited by departments for professional meetings and seminars.

10. The University can reconstitute the Middle States Evaluation Committees in order to place more women on their committees. It can also facilitate greater coordination between areas of the Council's work and those of the MSE.

11. The University can increase the amount of women working in the Advising Center by making teaching assistants eligible for these positions.

12. The University can institute immediately a policy of larger representation of women on University committees, e.g., the University Senate and Search Committees.

13. The University can act to raise secretarial salaries immediately but without instituting a decrease in the number of these positions.

14. The University can also act to clarify quota and recruitment policies.

15. The University can immediately recruit more women teaching consultants

in those areas and departments which the University already knows to be deficient in female representation.

The Council recommends that the Chancellor adopt the above course of action without further delay in order to implement the Affirmative Action Program and in order to fulfill his stated commitment of ending sex discrimination at the University of Pittsburgh.